

EXHIBIT O

Bernie Worrell's Post



Bernie Worrell · Follow



March 28, 2012 · 🌐

from Judie: well, here's a *very* interesting interview done by Chris Williams (in jolly ol' England): "Below is a link to the piece that I wrote about Mr. Worrell for SoulCulture Magazine. It was published on a few hours ago on our website www.soulculture.co.uk. I hope both you and Mr. Worrell will enjoy the piece and please share it with others. Thanks again for allowing me the chance to speak with you both. I wish you all continued success in the world. God bless.

Parliament's 1975 LP Mothership Connection revisited with Bernard Worrell | Return To The Classics: <http://tinyurl.com/7gulhfw>



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Great interview, Bernie you rule.

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Good read! Thanks Judie and Bernie!!

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PARLIAMENT'S 1975 LP MOTHERSHIP CONNECTION REVISITED WITH BERNARD WORRELL #RETURNTOTHECL ASSICS

By the mid 1970s, **Parliament** had become a full fledged funk/R&B ensemble that was taking the world by storm. Starting in 1974, the group began experiencing a series of mainstream successes.

After the releases of *Up for the Down Stroke* in 1974 and *Chocolate City* in early 1975, *Mothership Connection* was released on December 15, 1975 by Casablanca Records. Upon its release, the album was quickly embraced

due to the popularity of the lead single, “P. Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up).”

The aforementioned albums provided Parliament the opportunity to expand on its musicianship – and as a result, music audiences began to gravitate to their groundbreaking sounds en masse.

Parliament was unique in the way they constructed their albums from a creative standpoint. There was always a method to their madness and inside the music and lyrics there were messages encompassing subject matters such as science fiction, afro-futurism, and political and sociological themes. This became known as P-Funk mythology – and the ring leader for the outfit was the legendary **George Clinton**.

During this juncture, there were a plethora of outstanding musical groups dominating the musical landscape. Parliament was that rare brand of artists that could effectively intertwine the best of rhythm and blues, funk, and soul to formulate a generation defining aesthetic. Despite the competition from their contemporaries, Parliament left their funky grooves on the ears of pop and urban culture. Parliament became an in-demand act after the release of this album in late 1975. They reached an unprecedented level of success with this recording and it open the flood gates for much greater success toward the latter half of the decade.

This album would usher in two new members, **Maceo Parker** and **Fred Wesley** who were standout musicians in The J.B.’s, which were **James Brown**’s backing band. Each of the seven songs on the album showcased the evolution in Parliament’s hybrid sound. It would also become the first in a string of prolific recordings to be known as their genius period from 1975–1979.

The album would highlight the production talents of George Clinton, **William “Bootsy” Collins**, and **Bernard “Dr. Woo” Worrell** with contributions from group members **Garry Shider**, **Glen Goins** and **Jerome “Big Foot” Brailey**. All of these elements proved to skyrocket the collective to another realm of success once the album hit stores in the early winter of 1975.

Parliament began as a doo-wop singing group called **The Parliaments** in the late 1950s in Plainfield, New Jersey. They achieved their first hit record in 1967 entitled “(I Wanna) Testify.” During a contract dispute, The Parliaments lost the rights to their group name to **Revilot Records**.

At the beginning of the 1970s, George Clinton devised a plan to lead two different groups, Parliament and Funkadelic. After incorporating a band, the music shifted from its doo-wop origins to two different styles of funk music. The ensemble grew to become ten members due to various changes in personnel. Their wardrobe and music became elevated by the mid 1970s.

As the story goes, Parliament reformed its music and group once again in 1974 and they signed to Casablanca Records. They would release their debut album with label within the same year. Between the months of March–October 1975, *Mothership Connection* was recorded in various studios.

SoulCulture recently sat down with Bernard “Dr. Woo” Worrell to discuss how Parliament’s album was crafted from start to finish.



Worrell tells a fascinating story on how he

became a group member of Parliament.

“My family moved to Plainfield, New Jersey when I was eight years old,” says Worrell. “I started playing music at the age of three. My first concert was at four years old. I was brought up in a strict household. My mother would always tell me that I wasn’t going to be hanging out with those hoodlums on the corner,” he laughs.

“I was the church organist for the Episcopal Church, but word got out that some new kid moved to town and was some type of a genius. I used to sneak out of my bedroom window and go down to the barber shop and get my hair processed. Sometimes my mom would know where I was going, but that’s how I got to meet some of the riff-raff as my mom would call them.

They weren't riff-raff to me because it gave me a chance to meet other people outside from the church. I had fun listening to barbershop talk. My mom would come down with switches and get me out of the barber chair with the stuff still in my hair," he laughs. "This is where I got to hear some of Parliament's songs. I had a chance to go to a Parliament show to see them play in concert. They were doing doo-wop stuff back then. It was there where I got to meet George, Fuzzy Haskins, Ray Davis, Grady Thomas, and Calvin Simon because they were all barbers in the barbershop.

"One day, George asked me to write some lead sheets up. I did that and he said one day when he could afford me he would call. I was with Maxine Brown after college in Bermuda and then my wife called me saying that he wanted to meet with us at the Apollo. So she went and met with him. After meeting with him, she called me back and told me he was ready. He had just moved everyone to Detroit from New Jersey. He asked me if I would move to Detroit. I had to think about that one because the Detroit riots had just ended. Anyways, I made the move and the rest is history as they say."

Worrell discusses what his initial role was within the structure of the group, his style, and the contributions he made.

"When I first came into the group I was asked to be the keyboardist and musical director," says Worrell. "Being the band leader I would guide, direct, and arrange how I felt things should go from a musical standpoint. The string and horn arrangements I wrote from scratch. This is when we were using the real instruments and not the synthesizers," he laughs.

"Some of the members from the Detroit symphony played those string arrangements that I wrote by hand for this album. The part I played in making the music was taking the sounds I was hearing in my head and playing them out on the different keyboards I used for the album. I was trying to integrate those sounds into everything else that was going on musically whether I was co-writing a song or not. I was part of a team and I brought to the table what God blessed me with. I tried my best to incorporate my talent into what was being created at that time.

"Being a classically trained musician, part of my training was being part of a symphony while I was attending college. I know what woodwinds sound like along with French horns, oboes, bassoons, and string instruments. I know what a symphonic orchestra is supposed to sound like. My style is whatever I hear in my head I write it down accordingly. It is the gift God gave to me and I can't really explain it."

“Many times George and I would sit down and he would sing the melody and I would put the chords to it and arrange what we had done,” says Worrell. “Most of the time this would be in the studio and whoever came up with the chord changes I would arrange them on the spot. In the early years of the group, I’d give them some direction on what to play and then they would add their own riffs. Being that I had formal musical training, another one of my jobs was keeping our sound in the perfect pitch.

“Bootsy, George, and I were the main culprits. Bootsy and I would come up with the chord changes and bass lines. Before Bootsy joined the group, I would do the changes and the lines in the songs. We weren’t the only ones writing the songs, but as George would say we were the main three. The songs were borne out of impromptu jam sessions.

“As far as how long it took to make the album, I don’t remember, but I know it wasn’t done all at one time. We had gaps between songs. We would just be in the studio recording and then George would choose what songs would be going on to the next album. We had a library of music that was cut already, but wasn’t finished. It would all depend on what concepts were in George’s head. Once he made a decision, we went with it. He would always decide which songs would go on the Parliament album or the Funkadelic album.”

Worrell recalls the studio atmosphere that existed during the recording process of the album.

“We spent hours in the studio,” says Worrell. “If we weren’t in the studio, we were on the road. That’s why there was such a high volume of albums being recorded back then. It used to vary, but there were many days where we spent more than eight hours in the studio.

“We had some marathon sessions during that time. We had two and three engineers in the studio with us at all times because you have to give your ears a rest. I don’t know how those guys did it. There was the main engineer and the assistant. The main engineer had to take some breaks and get some sleep sometimes. All of our recording was done on analog.

“The most time consuming part of the process was the editing portion. You had to cut the recording tape with a razor blade. Now that is an art

"I remember how they put the tape together and measured it and marked the spots with chalk where you have to slice then tape it back together. My hat goes off to those engineers we worked with on that project. Sometimes we wouldn't get it right so we had to cut again or make it so it was a smooth edit so people couldn't tell there was an edit. It is truly an art form and gift to be able to do that type of work."

He adds, "Some of the instruments I played on this album were the Hammond organ, Concert Grand piano, electric piano, Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer, D6 clavinet with effects pedals, and the Moog synthesizer. I preferred the Wurlitzer because the touch was lighter."

Worrell briefly remembers how the first single, "P. Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up)" was created.

"P. Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up) was definitely classically influenced," says Worrell. "I did the horn arrangements and played the strings on this record. See, my thing is mixing musical genres. It's really something I love to do. In this particular piece, they did the playback and then I went into overdub mode. I layered against what I first did with the overdubbing. This is how the song took shape until the end of it."

http://youtu.be/BbkcWo5l_A8

"P. Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up)" went on to peak at #33 on the Billboard Hot Soul Singles Chart. It helped to generate sales for Mothership Connection after it was released to music audiences in the early winter of 1975.

The second single, "Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof off the Sucker)" would launch the group into another orbit of success. It became an anthem and gave the group its highest selling single to that point. Worrell recounts the intricate details of formulating the song.

"Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof off the Sucker) was a funk-oriented song," says Worrell. "The strings I played were on the Arp string ensemble. The strings are classically based and then the strings would answer the vocal. When you heard 'We Want the Funk' you'd hear the string response then you'd hear, 'Give Up the Funk.' This is another example of interjecting the classical flavour overtop the funk. I think that's what made P-Funk a

George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic - Give Up th...



“Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof off the Sucker)” went on to peak at #5 on the Billboard Hot Soul Singles Chart and #15 on the Billboard Hot 100 Singles Chart.

The final single released from the album was the popular record, “Mothership Connection (Starchild).” Worrell briefly recalls how he and Collins collaborated on making the song.

“Mothership Connection (Starchild)” had Bootsy playing the bass on the track,” says Worrell. “We definitely collaborated on arranging that song. The clavinet section on the song is an overdub done by me. The synth part that’s playing the theme floats through the whole piece, that’s the Arp modules. Toward the end it goes into ‘Swing Down, Sweet Chariot’ that’s the clavinet with the wah wah pedals on it. That is a very spiritual section of the song to me. It always touches me when I hear it.”

Parliament – “Mothership Connection (Starchild)”:

Worrell goes on to provide brief insight on how the remaining songs were constructed for the album.

“Unfunky UFO” was nothing but pure funk,” says Worrell. “That was Shider and Bootsy on this track. It is combination of church and funk because the

vocal gives it that church kind of feel. It also has a little rock influence on it as well. See, P-Funk we were into a lot of the English groups like Led Zeppelin. We were influenced by the rock sound. We loved pure rock music.”

“Supergroovalisticprosifunkstication” was also classically influenced with an R&B groove,” says Worrell. “The Arp bassoon like I spoke about before is on this track again. It gives it that quirky kind of feel. It was basically funk in’ for fun,” he laughs. “It also had a touch of the Baby Grand piano on there as well.”

Parliament – “Supergroovalisticprosifunkstication”:

“Handcuffs” definitely had Bootsy’s star bass playing on the track,” says Worrell. “It influenced me and the chord changes within the song are definitely church influenced. There was also a touch of blues on it, but funkified. I wrote the horn arrangement for this track after the rhythm section was done. You also have Mr. Glen Goins on the track. He is from the church so that’s where he took it. And of course that’s George putting his stamp on the song as well.”

Parliament – “Handcuffs”:

“Night of the Thumpasorus Peoples” had Bootsy on the bottom of the track,” says Worrell. “This song is a mixture of funk and classical R&B with the chord changes. It had a little mixture of everything including rock. This was song was all about hard funk in’. The next section of the song is reminiscent of a rock line. And the Gaga Goo Ga is of course G.C., he laughs.”

Parliament Funkadelic - Night of the Thumpasorus ...



Worrell expresses his feelings on being a part of such a legendary group and the significance of their album.

“It has been phenomenal,” says Worrell. “I would’ve never thought our music would become as big as it has. After the first few hits, the pressure came that we had to have another hit. But, initially, we were just recording having fun. You never think your music would be that big. I’m proud and grateful to be a part of the group and this album. People say I should talk more about myself, but I’m a humble guy and I prefer not to talk that much. But this album is definitely one of the classics.”

Mothership Connection peaked at #13 on the Billboard 200 Albums Chart and #4 on the Billboard Soul Albums Chart in the early spring of 1976. The album went on to sell more than 1 million units worldwide. To this day, it’s regarded as one of the more genre altering albums to be released from a group during the decade of the 1970s.

This album signaled a seismic shift in Black music and popular music with the synthesizer work and the outpouring of funk that commanded the attention of the music masses. It became the standard funk album that future artists would become heavily influenced by. It proved to be the album Parliament would use to establish their dominance as one of the prominent recording groups in the history of music. *Mothership Connection* remains a shining example of the powerful hybrid between funk, R&B, soul and rock music.

VH1 ranked this album as the 55th greatest album of all-time on their top 100 list of best albums in 2003. In that same year, Rolling Stone placed it

at #274 on their 500 greatest albums of all-time. It was also included in the book *1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die*. Thus, proving that this album will continue to stand the test of time.

Parliament – *Mothership Connection*

Released: December 15, 1975

Label: Casablanca Records

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By SoulCulture

2012.03.24

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